VISIT…

THE GHOSTS OF ANIEL

CREDITS

Design:	**Stephen Kenson**
Editing:	**Jesse Decker**
Web Production:	**Sue Cook**
Web Development	**Mark A. Jindra**
Graphic Design:	**Sean Glenn, Cynthia Fliege**

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. , and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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INTRODUCTION

The Ghosts of Aniel is a **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** adventure suitable for four 6th-level characters. The difficulty of the adventure can be adjusted by changing the level of the principle foe or by altering the number of his phase spider servants. To tailor the encounters to groups of different levels, refer to table 4–1 on page 101 of *The Dungeon Master's Guide*. The adventure is set in the Celadon forest, but it is easily adapted to any forested region in an existing campaign. Maps of elven dwellings similar to Revan's are available for download at `http://www.wizards.com/dnd/DnD_MW_Intro.asp`.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Aniel (an-EE-el) is an elven hamlet in the Celadon Forest. Like most elven communities, it has limited contact with the outside world, but a few weeks ago all contact with Aniel stopped. None of the elves were seen in the communities surrounding the forest, and no one heard anything from them. The group sent to investigate returned with tales of finding Aniel abandoned but also of strange and terrible things happening there; whispering voices, moaning sounds, objects moving of their own accord. It seems clear that Aniel is haunted.

Although the locals fear to return to the haunted village, they feel something must be done. If the elven hamlet is haunted, the ghosts there must be laid to rest, and the mystery behind the town's demise must be solved. Whatever fate befell the town might affect other settlements, so a new party must investigate.

The characters discover the hamlet is abandoned and haunted, although not necessarily in the way some think. There is actually only one ghost in Aniel, the spirit of a vengeful elf. The other inhabitants of Aniel are victims of this ghost, who used magic to transport them to the ethereal plane, trapping them there until they are rescued. The characters must find a way to overcome the ghost and his minions and return the people of Aniel to the material world.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters can become involved in this adventure in a number of ways. The simplest is for them to receive a request for aid from the people living in the area around the Celadon Forest. They might be passing through and hear stories about the haunted elven settlement of Aniel and realize that the surrounding areas might also be in danger. If the group has adventured in the area before, the local folk ask them to go to Aniel and find out what's happening.

Characters might be traveling through the forest headed elsewhere and stumble upon Aniel. The abandoned hamlet offers a mystery that some adventurers will be eager to solve.

An elf or half-elf player character might know of Aniel or even have friends or family there. The group might be in the area planning a visit, only to discover that something terrible has befallen the village. Other characters might have friends living in Aniel who are now among the missing.

BACKGROUND

The village of Aniel was home to an elf named Navae, a student of the arcane arts. Navae was fascinated by a magical gemstone called the galadiir, owned by Revan, Aniel's greatest wizard and Navae's teacher. Navae's fascination with the gem's secrets became an obsession when he discovered that the galadiir was won in a battle with the Drow long ago. Navae nursed an unhealthy interest in the dark elves from the time he first heard stories about them as a child. He longed to possess the galadiir and unlock its secrets, but his teacher Revan told him it was not something to be toyed with, and instructed him to leave it alone.

In secret, Navae sought out forbidden lore and became corrupted. He came to worship the spider-goddess Lolth, and she granted him powerful allies, phase spiders he could command. He dreamed of when he would be a great and powerful wizard, ruling over others. He decided that the key to his power was to possess the galadiir, so one night he crept into Revan's home to steal it. Unfortunately for Navae, a hunter named Tarien noticed his suspicious behavior and followed him. Tarien called out as Navae laid hands on the galadiir, waking Revan. In the struggle, Revan was bitten by a phase spider and fatally poisoned, but Tarien struck Navae a fatal blow.

Clutching the magical gemstone in his fist, Navae cursed Tarien. "I may be dragged into death," he said, "but where I go, you will all soon join me." The galadiir flared with power, and Navae died. Tarien went to Revan's aid, but he was too late to save Revan's life. His people buried Revan with honor, while Navae's body was cremated and the ashes scattered.

Three days later, the people of Aniel awoke to find that the world had become gray and lifeless, and they were unable to touch anything. They found themselves trapped on the ethereal plane, unable to touch or communicate with the physical world. Navae returned as a ghost, using his powers and his spider minions to terrorize the people of the village, who were unable to call for help. They tried when visitors first came to Aniel, but Navae frightened them away. They mounted an attack against the ghost, but everyone in the attacking party died except for Tarien, who was badly wounded. Tarien managed to kill Navae yet again, but the ghost simply reappeared a few days later, as powerful as ever. Now the only hope for the people of Aniel is that someone will come to save them.

Aniel (hamlet): Conventional; AL CG; 100 gp limit; Assets 750 gp; Population 146 (146 elves, 4 half-elves).

Authority Figure: Tarien, male elf Rgr3 (formerly Revan, male elf Wiz6)

Others: Brd1 (2), Clr1 (2), Ftr2 (2), Rog1 (1), Sor1 (2), Wiz2 (1), Wiz1 (2), Adp 2 (1), Adp1 (2), Exp4 (1), Exp2 (2), Exp1 (4), Com6 (1), Com3 (10), Com1 (110), War3 (1), War1 (2).

Notes: Aniel is a small elven community in the depths of the forest. The homes are built on the ground or in the tree branches to blend harmoniously with the environment. There are thirty homes in Aniel, scattered around an area of ten large trees. many of the highest level characters in Aniel have recently died because of Navae.

Wilderness Encounters

Characters may encounter dangerous creatures while traveling through the forest to Aniel. The Celadon Forest is filled with wildlife, although elven hunters normally keep dangerous creatures away from the trails. It takes the characters eight hours to reach Aniel from the outskirts of the forest, and there is a 1-in-10 chance of an encounter each hour they travel through the woods. If an encounter is indicated, roll on the Celadon Forest Encounters Table to determine what the characters run into.

Celadon Forest Encounters

1d10	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	EL
1	Dire boar	1	4	4
2	Ettercap	2	4	5
3	Harpy	2	4	5
4	Owlbear	2	4	5
5	Dire lion	1	5	5
6	Worgs	8	2	5
7	Manticore	1	5	5
8	Troll	1	5	5
9	Shadow Mastiff	1	5	5
10	Ethereal Elf*	1	2	2

* This encounter indicates that one of the inhabitants of Aniel finds the characters in the forest and follows them, trying to contact them and ask for their help. If the characters are able to detect the ethereal elf in some way, see The Elves of Aniel encounter (below) for guidelines about what they can learn about the current situation.

Encounters in Aniel

There are four encounters in the hamlet of Aniel, described below.

The Elves of Aniel

When the characters first arrive in Aniel, they find the

entire hamlet apparently deserted, with no indication of what happened to the people who lived there. There are signs of forest scavengers raiding the elves' food stores, but otherwise nothing. Homes and possessions remain undisturbed. There are no bodies or signs of violence. There are also no signs of habitation for the past several weeks. A careful search of the area (Search, DC 20) turns up a relatively fresh grave on the outskirts of the hamlet. This is the gravesite of Revan the wizard (see Adventure Background for details). He's been dead for at least a few weeks, and there are still signs of the phase spider bite that killed him on his right leg.

The inhabitants of Aniel actually haven't gone anywhere. They're all around the characters, but invisible and incorporeal to them. If the characters have any means of detecting ethereal beings (such as see invisibility or true seeing) and use it, they can see (and hear) the elves around them. As soon as the elves realize one or more of the characters can see them, they begin babbling at them in Common and Elven, pleading for their help and trying to tell them what's happened. It takes the elves roughly 15 minutes to calm down and organize themselves well enough to present the background information clearly. A character can speed this process by making DC 15 Diplomacy check. If the Diplomacy check is successful, the elves calm down in one round.

Once the tumult is calmed down, Tarien steps forward to explain the situation to the characters. He tells them about the events from the Adventure Background section from his point of view and to the best of his knowledge. He also explains that he thinks the galadiir can restore the elves to the material world and possibly put Navae to rest, but the elves have been unable to reach it from the ethereal plane. It's kept in a locked and protected case in Revan's home. Tarien (or another elf) can show the party where it is and tell them about the traps guarding it, although he can't disarm them (see Revan's Home, below, for details).

Ghostly Attacks

Shortly after the characters enter Aniel, Navae begins to harass them with ghostly hauntings and sudden attacks. The ghost uses his telekinesis ability to slam doors and windows, knock over objects, send things flying through the air, and even to push climbing characters, resulting in a 20-30 foot fall from the upper tree-houses (doing 2d6-3d6 damage).

Navae also has his phase spiders attack the characters, with only one spider appearing at a time. The spider shifts to the material plane, attacks, and phases back out again immediately as a move-equivalent action. Unless the characters have a means of detecting ethereal beings, the spiders always surprise them and catch them flat-footed (eliminating their Dex bonuses to AC). If the characters can detect ethereal beings, check for surprise normally, but keep in mind that the people of Aniel will also try to warn the characters if they spot one of the phase spiders about to attack. It requires a Spot or Wilderness Lore check with a DC of 20 to determine that the phase spiders attacking the characters are not all one creature, but several different ones. Characters who speak with the elves can find out there are three phase spiders total in the hamlet, under Navae's control.

Navae's goal is to kill all of the characters except for one he can possess with his malevolence ability, allowing him to get at the galadiir again. But before that happens, he wants the characters to get at the gem for him, and may try to convince them to do so (see below).

Phase Spiders (3): CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 5d10+15; hp 42; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk bite +7 melee (1d6+4 and poison); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Ethereal jaunt, poison; SQ AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +12, Move Silently +11, Spot +9, *Feats:* Improved Initiative.

SA–Ethereal jaunt (Su): A phase spider can shift from the Ethereal to the Material Plane as a free action, and shift back again as a move-equivalent action. This ability is otherwise identical with ethereal jaunt cast by a 15th-level sorcerer.

SA–Poison (Ex) Bite, Fortitude save (DC 15); initial and secondary damage 2d6 temporary Constitution.

Navae's Deception

If the characters do not make contact with the people of Aniel and have no means of seeing ethereal beings, Navae uses his manifestation ability to appear to them. He claims to be one of the elves trapped by the curse of an evil wizard, and only able to speak to them for a brief time through a magical spell. He tells them that a magical gem in Revan's home can save the elves if the characters can get it. Navae knows the galadiir is in a cabinet closed with an arcane lock, but he doesn't know about the fire trap placed on it (it was done after he died). He asks the characters to get the gem, then fades away, telling them to hurry.

Navae follows the characters to Revan's home and attempts to possess the character nearest to the galadiir, as described on the next page.

The Galadiir

The solution to the problem in Aniel lies with the galadiir, the magical gemstone Navae wants. After Revan's death, the elves of Aniel replaced the galadiir in its wooden box and used one of Revan's scrolls to cast a fire trap on the book (with a caster level of 7, for 1d4+7 damage), keyed to the elders of the hamlet. They then placed the box inside a stout cabinet built into Revan's study and sealed it with an arcane lock. Several of the elves, including Tarien, know where the galadiir is, but unfortunately they don't know exactly what it can do, since that knowledge was lost with Revan and no one has yet had time to go through his various notes and journals.

Revan's home is built in and around the trunk of a large tree near the middle of Aniel, about 20 feet off the ground. A spiral staircase winds around the trunk of the tree up to the humble home. The interior contains a sleeping room and a combination study and laboratory where Revan worked. The cabinet holding the galadiir can be found in the second room. In addition to the gem, the cabinet contains five scrolls with arcane spells all at caster level 7 (1—*charm monster and dimension door*; 2—*silent image* and *sleep*; 3—*knock* and *locate object*; 4—*dispel magic*; 5—*see invisibility*). The last scroll will allow the characters to communicate with the people of Aniel, if they don't already have the ability among them. The cabinet also contains a *wand of polymorph self* that belonged to Revan with 18 charges remaining. The DC to break open the cabinet door is 28 with the arcane lock in place (18 otherwise) and picking the physical lock is DC 30 (Tarien has the key with him, on the ethereal plane, where they don't do anyone any good).

Navae keeps a close eye on the characters and follows them if they go to Revan's home. As soon as one of the characters has the box containing the galadiir, Navae uses his malevolence ability and attempts to possess him or her, ordering his phase spiders to kill the rest of the characters. He then casts *sanctuary*, followed by *expeditious retreat*, and flees from the area as quickly as possible.

Navae, male elf ghost Clr1/Wiz3: CR 6; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 31; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 deflection bonus); Atk +3 melee (1d4, corrupting touch); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Manifestation, corrupting touch, malevolence, telekinesis; SQ Undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation +4 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +6, Hide +12, Knowledge (religion) +6, Move Silently +4, Search +12, Spellcraft +6, Spot +12, *Feats:* Scribe Scroll, Toughness (x2).

SA–Manifestation: can become visible and attack by touch or spells.

SA–Corrupting Touch: Incorporeal attack doing 1d4 damage.

SA–Malevolence: Can possess a character by touch, Will save (DC 19) to resist.

SA–Telekinesis: Can move objects at will like a *telekinesis* spell at caster level 12.

SQ–Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ–Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

SQ–Rejuvenation: Successful level check vs. DC 16 allows a ghost to return 2d4 days after being destroyed.

SQ–Turn Resistance Turn resistance +4.

Possessions: None.

Arcane Spells Prepared (4/3/2): 0—*daze, ghost sound, mage hand, resistance*; 1st—*cause fear, expeditious retreat, spider climb*; 2nd—*knock, web*.

Spellbook: 0—all cantrips; 1st—*cause fear, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield, spider climb, true strike*; 2nd—*knock, web*.

Divine Spells Prepared (3/2): 0—*cure minor wounds, guidance, resistance* (2); 1st—*obscuring mist, sanctuary, protection from good* (domain spell).

Once he's sure he's evaded any pursuit, Navae opens the box (setting off the fire trap, which he didn't know was there, but the damage isn't likely to incapacitate him). He uses the gem's final wish to transform the character's body into his own, making his possession permanent (and effectively killing the character). He then leaves Aniel and the player characters to their fate.

The Galadiir: The stone the people of Aniel call the galadiir is a beautiful dark opal worth 8,000 gp for the gem alone. But its actual value is far greater. It is an ancient relic won from the Drow long ago and guarded by the people of Aniel, passed down over the years. The Galadiir is a *gem of three wishes* (similar to a *ring of three wishes*, p. 195, DMG). One *wish* was used in the defeat of the Drow. Navae used the second to bring about

his curse, leaving one *wish* remaining. The characters can use it to undo the effects of the curse, rescuing the people of Aniel and ensuring that Navae's spirit is put to rest.

CONCLUSION

If the characters overcome Navae and use the galadiir (or some other means) to restore the people of Aniel, they receive the gratitude of the elves, who offer the characters the (now non-magical) galadiir as a reward for their efforts, and hold a celebration in their honor. If the characters managed to find some way of restoring the elves without using the final wish from the galadiir, the people of Aniel offer to use it to grant the characters one wish of their choice (provided it's something the elves find worthy).

If Navae managed to possess one of the characters and use the galadiir's final wish to make his possession permanent, the characters have a greater challenge ahead of them. They have to find some other means of restoring the people of Aniel, which may entail a quest to find a powerful spellcaster or magic item. They also have to find Navae if they are to have any hope of recovering their companion. The former ghost goes to ground. He plans to accumulate power and knowledge before seeking out the Drow in order to serve Lolth. He can become an adversary of the characters in the future.

Rewards

The characters receive experience points for overcoming the various challenges in this adventure as follows:

Defeating Navae: 1,800 XP

Defeating the phase spiders: 1,200XP each

Overcoming the fire trap spell: 300 XP

Discovering the truth of what happened in Aniel: 1,500 XP

Add any additional experience for wilderness encounters on the way to Aniel to determine the party's final XP total.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Kenson has been a freelance writer in the RPG industry for five years and a gamer for far longer than he'd care to admit. He's written for a number of games including *Shadowrun*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES and DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE. His work appears regularly in *DRAGON* magazine. Steve maintains a website with gaming articles he has written and information about his current projects. It can be found at `http://members.aol.com/talonmail`. He can be reached by email at `talonmail@aol.com`.